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THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society Berkeley, California Volume 75 Number 11 December 1993

LEAST TERN THREATENED BY DECOMMISSIONING OF ALAMEDA NAVAL AIR STATION

There are only 2000 California Least Terns in the world. Most are in southern California, but 100 or so pairs have found a safe nesting site at the Alameda Naval Air Station. This is the northern-most colony of the Least Tern and over the years it has thrived under the watchful and caring eye of the Navy with whom GGAS has worked in studying and managing the colony.

But now the Navy is leaving and there is no assurance that the Least Tern will be considered when uses for the Alameda Naval Air Station are discussed. One of our members is on the environmental advisory committee for the conversion of the Air Station but finds that most, if not all, of the discussion is on economics, not endangered species.

The Air Station is important to other species besides the Least Tern. The Station hosts the largest Caspian Tern colony in the Bay Area, the second largest Western Gull colony and the largest Brown Pelican roosting area. The Brown Pelican is, of course, another endangered species.

We are concerned that these species receive the attention they deserve in the conversion process. You can help. Please call or write: Congressman Ron Delums, 2136 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; phone: 510-763-0370.

(continued on next page)

LAST CALL FOR CHRISTMAS COUNTS

The first Christmas Bird Counts were planned as counter-activities to the traditional Christmas Bird Shoots, alternative service for the cause of wildlife, as it were. Over the years, Christmas Bird Counts have multiplied and taken on a life of their own—social activities that contribute vital information to an on-going database. We've all had the experience of describing a Christmas count to someone and having them roll their eyes and inquire with some asperity how

(continued on next page)

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LEAST TERN*(continued)*

Ask him to make sure that the wildlife habitat located on the Alameda Naval Air Station is preserved for wildlife. As Chairperson of the Armed Services Committee, and as Representative of the District, Congressperson Dellums will play an important role in the future of the Alameda Naval Air Station.

We have suggested to Congressperson Dellums and others that the best way to preserve this habitat is to designate this section of the Air Station as part of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

Letters to Alameda County Supervisor Don Perata would also be helpful: Supervisor Don Perata, 1221 Oak Street, Suite 536, Oakland, CA 94612.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Arthur Feinstein at the GGAS Office (510-843-2222) or at home (415-282-5937). Thanks.

ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

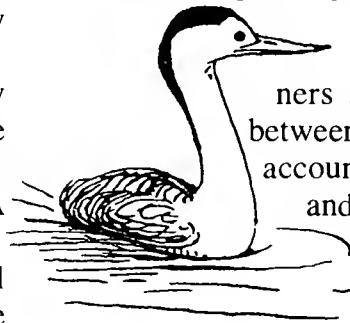
DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 6—SF Conservation Committee
Call office for location.
- 13—East Bay Conservation Committee,
GGAS Office, 7:30 p.m.
- 19—Oakland Christmas Count
- 28—San Francisco Christmas Count

CHRISTMAS COUNTS *(continued)*

you know you haven't counted the same birds twice. You don't know, of course, but that's not the point. Ninety-plus years of information tends to balance out the double-counts and the misses; the foul-weather days and the glorious ones. The result is an exceptionally rich fund of data available to scientists and researchers interested in determining trends in bird populations.

Christmas count days can be liesurely or frantic depending on the count area



and the leaders.

Count-down dinners seem to alternate between edge-of-the-seat accounts of rarities seen and bite-by-bite descriptions of

epicurean delights that made survival of the day possible.

There's room for everyone on a Christmas count. Of course there's always a need for experienced birders: the more good eyes and ears there are, the more birds there are that are found and counted. But beginners and less experienced folks should not be deterred: someone always has to count the coots and the ducks and keep the tally sheets. It's the total effort that counts.

The Oakland count is Sunday, December 19, 1993; the San Francisco count is Tuesday, December 28, 1993.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$20 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 15, 1917,
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The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.

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Call the GGAS office at (510) 843-2222 to sign up. Area assignments are made up in early December so it is best not to wait until the last minute to indicate your interest. On the other hand, more help is always welcome.

* * *

If you have time and energy and wish to get more than two counts under your belt, the following is a by-no-means exclusive list of other northern California counts and the contact person for each:

December 17 **Lake Almanor**
(Steve Laymon, 619-378-3345)

December 18 **Point Reyes**
(David Wimpfheimer, 415-663-1363)

December 18 **Santa Cruz**
(David Suddjian, 408-479-9603)

December 18 **Mount Diablo**
(Maury Stern, 510-284-5980)

December 19 **Red Bluff**
(Steve Laymon, 619-378-3345)

December 20 **Parkfield**
(Debra Shearwater, 408-688-1990)

December 27 **Monterey Bay**
(Debra Shearwater, 408-688-1990)

December 28 **Monterey Peninsula**
(Bob Tintle, 1286 Adobe Lane,
Pacific Grove, CA 93950)

December 31 **Southern Marin**
(Dianne Sierra, 510-654-8124)

January 1 **Moss Landing**
(The Warriners, 408-722-5589)

January 1 **Kern River—Lake Isabella**
(Steve Laymon, 619-378-3345)

January 2 **Kern River—
So. Fork Valley**
(Steve Laymon, 619-378-3345)

January 2 **Western Sonoma**
(Betty Burrridge, 1653 Arroyo Sierra
Way, Santa Rosa, CA 95405)

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Saturday, December 4—Monterey Bay and Coastal Areas. Meet at 9 a.m. in Monterey at the foot of Coast Guard Pier. (Bring quarters for parking.) We will bird this area then drive north, stopping at various spots including Moss Landing. We will be looking for loons, grebes, gulls, alcids, and rocky coastline species. Beginners are welcome. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leader: Don Starks (408) 226-4134, (eve.) (✓)

Wednesday, December 8—Mini-trip to Lake Merritt, Oakland. Meet at the Rotary Science Center at 9:30 a.m. Go east on Grand Ave., cross Harrison St. and turn right on Bellevue Ave. to Lake Merritt. Continue to the Rotary Science Center, on the right—just beyond the duck pond. This is a good opportunity to review waterfowl. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Saturday, December 11—Coyote Hills Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Visitors' Center for a half-day trip. (You might choose to make it a full-day outing by spending the afternoon, on your own, at nearby S.F. Bay Wildlife Refuge.)

From East Bay take I-880 south to Rt. 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Go west and take Ardenwood/Newark Blvd. exit. Continue on Ardenwood Blvd. three-quarters of a mile to Commerce Dr. and follow signs to Coyote Hills. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 south beyond Redwood City, cross the Dumbarton Bridge and exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy.; go north one mile to Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow signs to Coyote Hills.

We will be looking for Virginia Rails and Soras, and expect to see a variety of waterfowl, Black-shouldered Kites and perhaps a Loggerhead Shrike. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 523-7108 \$ (✓)

Sunday, December 19—Oakland Christmas Count.

Tuesday, December 28—San Francisco Christmas Count.

Wednesday, January 12—Mini-trip to Arrowhead Marsh, Oakland. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the marsh. Take Hwy. 880 (Nimitz) to the Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west to Doolittle Dr. and turn right. Go a short distance and turn right again onto Swan. Turn left after about a block and follow the signs to the marsh (Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline). Park in the second parking lot on the left. We will look for Burrowing Owls, shorebirds and waterfowl. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510/351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Plan Ahead:

Saturday, January 15—Three trips scheduled. There is something for everyone—take your pick:

(1) Palo Alto Baylands. Leader: Dan Murphy.

(2) Delta area—Lodi, Woodbridge Rd. and Staten Island. Leader: David Yee.

(3) Carrizo Plain. Leader: Eben McMillan.

For details on above trips see January issue of *The Gull*.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓). See below.

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (510) 524-2399

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

OCTOBER OBSERVATIONS

We tend to think of the weather in terms of how it affects our day-to-day lives, judging the immediacy and leaving it at that. This fall, the coast was foggy—the last third of September was the foggiest on record at S.E. Farallon since data collection began in 1972 and landbird migration there was correspondingly slow since birds couldn't find the socked-in island. Not content to moan and groan about the bad weather, scientists there then noted that especially foggy Septembers had a direct correlation with Brandt's Cormorant breeding success the following season which could be attributed not to the fog but to the colder sea surface temperatures which resulted in more fog but also in greater ocean productivity, i.e., more food and nutrients for feeding seabirds. So although landbird counts were down, much else was up because of the colder water: swarms of krill; juvenile sardines (returning for the second year after being absent for nearly 50 years because of overfishing); large numbers of whales and seabird feeding flocks, pinnipeds and fish; and more sharks than usual. The fall also brought the first island record of Guadalupe Fur Seal, once thought to be extinct, and now known to number between one and three thousand. The island record, added to two individuals in Monterey Bay this fall and another two brought into the Marine Mammal Center perhaps bode well for this species.

In general, this fall was a good one for seabirds with pelagic trips reporting back moderate to large numbers of birds and viewers from shore entertained, particularly at the end of the month, with up to 1000 Black-vented Shearwaters. Five Flesh-footed Shearwaters were seen on a Cordell Bank trip on the 9th (SBT) with additional individuals

reported from Monterey on the 24th (DGY) and the Farallones on the 30th (MLE). Another **Manx Shearwater**, the fifth of the season, was seen eight to ten miles off Moss Landing in Monterey Bay on the 24th (DGY). One wonders if these birds have been occurring here in small numbers in the past and have been overlooked or whether we've all of a sudden had a "bloom." The next few years should tell us something. One Wilson's and four Least Storm-Petrels were in Monterey Bay on the 3rd (SBT). There were two South Polar Skuas, one in Monterey on the 24th (DGY) and one off the Farallones on the 30th (MLE). A **Thick-billed Murre**, hobnobbing with Common Murres, was well-seen on a Farallones trip on the 24th (SBT).

The **Brown Booby** continued to be seen on S. E. Farallon until the 18th (PRBO), a month earlier than it disappeared last year (PRBO). An immature Little Blue Heron was at the Salinas River mouth from the 24th to the 28th (DR). Small numbers of this species have been seen through the summer at Alviso at the south end of San Francisco Bay.



The first Tufted Duck of the season turned up at Alviso on the 29th (SCR, MMR, MiF); another was sighted November 3 at Rodeo Lagoon (SP). Up

to three Oldsquaws were off Limantour Beach at Point Reyes (JDi, RS, mob); another two were off Pomponio Beach in San Mateo County (RSTh).

The **Black Vulture**, judged to be an immature, continued to be seen in Arcata through the 10th (DEQ, JM, DR). This may well turn out to be the first accepted state record for this species if the procession of California listers to Arcata is any indication of the thinking on the subject.

Two **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** showed up in the area: one at Crittendon Marsh in Santa Clara County from the 8th to the 14th (PJM, mob) and one at Princeton Harbor in mid-month (BB, SW, JM). One of the Asian strays, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers are among the latest of the shorebird vagrants to get here, usually not arriving before late September. Crittenden Marsh was a bit of a shorebird hotspot for a while there with four Stilt Sandpipers (PJM, MMR, MiF) and a Ruff (SCR, mob) in addition to the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. The South Bay was the place to go for Ruffs in October; added to the Crittenden Marsh bird were individuals at Alviso (SCR, mob), Sunnyvale (SBT), and Mountain View (JMD, DH). A female Ruff on S. E. Farallon on the 15th was the first island record for the species (PRBO). A Franklin's Gull spent ten days in Fremont in mid-month (AlH, mob); and there was a Glaucous Gull in Mendocino on the 31st (JRW).

Last month, we reported the first Northern California record of **Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher**, a ratty individual that stayed for a few hours one afternoon at Point Reyes. In the spirit of good things coming in pairs, however, a second individual showed up at Pine Gulch Creek near Bolinas on the 6th and remained until the 10th (KH, mob). Unlike the ones in Arizona which sound like a rubber-ducky and are easy to see, this bird was silent and often difficult

to spot as it huddled in the midst of the foliage. A total of twenty-one Tropical Kingbirds was reported; this species is more likely here in the fall and winter than Western Kingbird. The **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** continued to grow its tail and was a flamboyant fixture around Nicasio until the 24th (mob). There were two Mountain Bluebirds on S.E. Farallon (PRBO) and one at Point Reyes (JM, DWm) at the end of the month. Sage Thrashers were found at Point Reyes (two of them) (JMR, RS) and Livermore (ALE).

A **Yellow Wagtail** made a brief appearance at the Hayward Shoreline on the 6th (RJR). **Red-throated Pipits** numbered eight: four at Point Reyes (TB, DSh, SCR, mob); three on S. E. Farallon (PRBO); and one on the San Mateo coast (RSTh). There were Northern Shrikes at Davis (ShH, LEde); Point Reyes (JM); and S. E. Farallon where the bird hung mice all over the island (PRBO).



This was a terrific month for vireos. Beginning with Solitary Vireo, there were five "blue headed" (the eastern subspecies *solitarius*) and three *plumbeus*, the very gray Rocky Mountain subspecies. There are ongoing whispers that eventually Solitary Vireo will be split into three separate species, so it's worth learning to distinguish one from another. A **Yellow-throated Vireo**, an extremely rare migrant, was reported from Olema on the 21st (JMcD). The spate of **Philadelphia Vireos** continues: two in Pescadero (RSTh, mob); one on S. E. Farallon (PRBO); one in Bolinas (KH, mob);

and two in Monterey County (CHo, fide DR). This is not a bird that is reported every year here (it's quite rare on the west coast, it can also be a bit tricky to distinguish it from Warbling Vireo and therefore it may be overlooked on occasion) and so the fact that we have now had eight this fall is quite phenomenal. There were also four reports of **Yellow-green Vireo**, a tropical species which has once again been split from Red-eyed Vireo, but which again is a knotty identification problem. There were two different individuals in Bolinas (KH, JBo, TEa, mob); one on S. E. Farallon (PRBO) and one at Point Reyes (RS, JMHu). And, for gravy, there were four Red-eyed Vireos (JCS, GjH, KH, DN, BS).

The list of warblers is notable mainly for the incredible number of Palm Warblers which are considered vagrants on the west coast, a fact that is difficult to discern from the number of sightings this fall. With 233 arrivals, it was the most common landbird on S. E. Farallon Island, outnumbering Yellow-rumped Warblers two to one (PRBO). It seemed to be impossible to spend a day in the field without seeing at least a dozen, always a help on a particularly slow day.

WARBLERS

TENNESSEE WARBLER

1, 1	10/1, 2-4	San Francisco	MMC, DSg, ASH
1	10/2	Andrew Moldera S.P.	CHo
1	10/5-6	Pescadero	RSTh, MiF
1	10/9	Sacramento	ShH

NASHVILLE WARBLER

total of 14 reported

NORTHERN PARULA

1	10/3-5	Bodega Bay	DHo, DN, DnB
1	10/8	Olema	RS fide KH
1	10/24	El Granada	BS fide RSTh

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER

3 total	10/1-16	San Francisco	ASH, BJ, DSg, MH
1	10/3-11	Pescadero	RSTh, AME, JMcK, PR
1, 2	10/3, 10	Andrew Molera, S.P.	GjH, CHo

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER

1	10/3	Santa Cruz Co.	GjH
3 total	10/3-6	S. E. Farallon	PRBO
2, 1	10/5, 19	Point Reyes	RS, JMR, FGB
1	10/10-17	Coyote Hills	EM, mob

MAGNOLIA WARBLER

1	10/3-9	Pescadero	RSTh, GD, JSC
1	10/3	Bodega Bay	DHo, DN
1	10/3	San Francisco	ASH
4 total	10/5-27	S. E. Farallon	PRBO
1	10/5	Bolinas	KH
4 total	10/6-8	Point Reyes	RS, JM, KF, FGB
1	10/17	Carmel River	RF

CAPE MAY WARBLER

1,1	10/6,6-8	Point Reyes	RS, KF, DH
1	10/26	S. E. Farallon	PRBO

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER

1	10/6	Bodega Bay	RoM
1, 1	10/6,29	Point Reyes	RS, JM, SBT
1	10/9	Cordell Bank pelagic	SBT
1	10/15-16	S. E. Farallon	PRBO
1	10/17	Marin Headlands	JiD
1	10/22-24	Pescadero	RSTh, AME, AV, GD

HERMIT WARBLER

1	10/28	Point Reyes	RS
1	10/31	Pescadero	RSTh

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER

1	10/2-8	Point Reyes	BC, RS, JM, KF
1	10/4	S. E. Farallon	PRBO
1	10/9-10	Andrew Molera S.P.	CHo

PINE WARBLER

1	10/24	Andrew Molera S.P.	CHo
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PRAIRIE WARBLER

2 total	10/ 8-11	San Mateo Coast	BS, RSTh, JMcK
1	10/9-10	Andrew Molera S.P.	CHo
1, 1	10/10, 18-20	Bolinas	DN, EHa, DSH, JMR, RJR
1, 1	10/18,27	S. E. Farallon	PRBO
1	10/19	Point Reyes *	JMR

PALM WARBLER

Mainland—October: 246 individuals reported
 Season: 354 individuals reported
 S. E. Farallon—October: 233 arrivals, 205 banded
 Season: 277 arrivals, 245 banded

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER

1	10/3	S. E. Farallon	PRBO
1	10/11	Point Reyes	JBo
1	10/16	Coyote Hills	RJR

BLACKPOLL WARBLER

5 total	9/30- 10/29	San Mateo Coast	RSTh
3 total	10/2-7	Point Reyes	BC, JMR, MiF, JM
1	10/3	Bodega Bay	DHo, DN
3 total	10/6-15	S. E. Farallon	PRBO

(continued)

3 total	10/9-23	Monterey Co.	CHo, NiL
1	10/14-17	Coyote Hills	FGB, JM
1	10/16	Bolinas	JSC

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER

8 total	9/30- 10/31	Pescadero	RSTh, BS, AME, RF, BM
1	10/2-3	Point Reyes	BC, DSh
3 total	10/3-24	Andrew Molera S.P.	GjH, CHo
2	10/7-11	Bolinas	KH, JM, HG, RJR
1	10/30	Point Arena	JRW

AMERICAN REDSTART

3 total	10/1-8	Pescadero	RSTh, JM, BS
3 total	10/4-9	S. E. Farallon	PRBO
3 total	10/5-16	Point Reyes	JMR, FGB, LLu
1	10/7	San Francisco	ASH
1	10/9-10	Andrew Molera S.P.	CHo

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER

1	9/26- 10/5	Pescadero	RSTh
1	10/19-20	Arcata	BRo
1	10/24-27	Point Reyes	JBo, TEa
1	11/02	Sacramento N.W.R.	SAd

OVENBIRD

1	10/5	Santa Cruz Co.	ELb
1	10/16-17	Point Reyes	LLu, RAR

CONNECTICUT WARBLER

1	10/2	Andrew Molera S.P.	CHo
1	10/4-6	S. E. Farallon	PRBO

MOURNING WARBLER

1	9/30- 10/3	Bolinas	KH
1	10/2-3	Rodeo Lagoon	JM, BCo
3 total	10/4-7	S. E. Farallon	PRBO

This time of year, the default tanager is Summer and there were three, two at Point Reyes (JAW, LLu) and one on S. E. Farallon (PRBO). But the excitement was caused by a **Scarlet Tanager** found early on Saturday the 23rd at Drakes Beach (JM), a lethargic yellow bird that was easy to see when it moved, but it frequently didn't for long periods of time. It remained for the day, but was never seen again. There were five Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (NTC, GjH, CHo, PRBO) and one Indigo Bunting (CHo) reported.

Sparrows included on American Tree at Point Reyes (JMR); thirty-seven Clay-colored all over the place; three Brewer's (PRBO, JSL, SCR); four

(continued on page 186)



*Redeemable at Golden Gate Audubon Society
Seed Sale. Please call to confirm order.*

MERRY HOLIDAYS TO ALL

Multiply the meaning of the holiday season by giving gifts that give more than once. An Audubon gift membership opens up a wealth of activities in and ideas about the natural world for a friend or family member; you receive a bonus gift; and Golden Gate Audubon gets credit for the gift membership. The financial fact of life for local Audubon chapters is that National Audubon returns to them \$15 for each new member and \$5 for each renewal. This particular offer is an effort on the part of National Audubon to increase membership and at the same time give the local chapters some incentive to push the program—credit for the gift goes to the home chapter, no matter

where the recipient lives. Well, we're biting...that \$15 per membership looks awfully good in these austere times and we urge you to make this an Audubon holiday—brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, distant friends and relatives—remember them with Audubon and they'll remember you every month of the year, as will Golden Gate Audubon.

Also consider giving a gift certificate that can be redeemed at one of our seed sales for a feeder or bird seed or any of the other items that we sell. Again, this is a gift that benefits us all, including the birds.

Happy Holidays!

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When you give your first gift, you'll receive the limited edition 1993 Painted Bunting Suncatcher ornament. Give two or more gift memberships, and receive an additional bonus, Audubon's pocket guide, "A Selection of Familiar Birds of North America."

The more memberships you give, the more you'll save. Your first gift, or your own renewal, is just \$30, and each additional gift is just \$20 - a savings of 43% on basic membership dues! Remember, Golden Gate Audubon gets credit for each new membership and Audubon has more valuable members like you.

If the new member resides in our territory, they will be added to our chapter. If the new member lives elsewhere and in the territory of a chapter, they are assigned to their local chapter, and will receive the local chapter newsletter.

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Add additional sheets as necessary. Each coupon should contain the code 7XSCO Chapter Code CO2. \$20 of your dues is for *Audubon* magazine. Basic membership dues are \$35. Canadian and international addresses, please add \$10 to cover postage.

OBSERVATIONS

(continued from page 184)

Vesper (DDeS, RSTh, DSh, BS); three Sharp-tailed (MMR, JBo); and thirty Swamp. There were fifteen Lapland Longspurs, one in Santa Clara County (SCR) and all the rest in West Marin (mob); and single Chestnut-collared Longspurs at Point Reyes (RS), Half Moon Bay (RSTh) and S. E. Farallon (PRBO). Bobolinks showed up at Point Reyes (DHo) and S. E. Farallon (PRBO); and a Yellow-headed Blackbird at the Las Gallinas Sewer Ponds was unusual for Marin (RLe). A Scott's Oriole on S. E. Farallon from the 27th to the 30th was only the second island record for this species (PRBO). There were a few Red Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks.

OBSERVERS: Sue Adair, Dennis Beall, Florence G. Bennett, Jim Booker, Tony Briggs, Bill Bruni, Byron Colborn, J. Scott Cox, Jim Danzenbaker (JiD), J. Michael Danzenbaker, Gary Deghi, Dave DeSante, Jack Dineen (JDi), Bruce E. Duell, Todd Easterla, Leo Edson, Arthur L. Edwards, Alan M. Eisner, Michael L. Ezekiel, Mike Feighner, Kathy Franccone, Reid Freeman, Helen Green, Keith Hansen, Ed Hase, Shawn Hayes, Gjon Hazard, Mike Healy, Donna Heim, Alice Hoch, David Hofmann, Craig Hohenberger, Alan S. Hopkins, Joan M. Humphries, Bill Jones, Robert J. Keiffer, Rick Lebadour, Earl Lebow, Nick Lethaby, Leslie Lieurance, John S. Luther, Mac MacCormick, Roger Marlowe, John McDonough, Bart McKee, John McKean, Peter J. Metropulos, Ellis Meyers, Joe Morlan, Dan Nelson, Spencer Platt, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, David E. Quady, Peter Radcliffe, Jean M. Richmond, Robert J. Richmond, Don Roberson,

Bill Rodstrom, Mike M. Rogers, Steve C. Rotterborn, Ruth A. Rudesill, Barry Sauppe, Doug Shaw, Dan Singer, Rich Stallcup, Scott B. Terrill, Ron S. Thorn, Anne Verdi, Janet A. Wessel, Strickland Wheelock, Jerry R. White, David Wimpfheimer, David G. Yee. Data thanks to Joe Morlan and the Northern California Rare Bird Alert. Farallones information thanks to Point Reyes Bird Observatory and Peter Pyle.

—ANN DEWART



WHEELCHAIR-FRIENDLY FIELD TRIPS

We've done some preliminary research on areas that might be appropriate for field trips for people with restricted mobility. We will continue to pursue this and hope to set up some trips that will consider accessibility as the major criterion. However, we would like to get an idea of how many of our members would be interested and if there are particular problems that you would like us to address. Call the office at 510/843-2222 or Russ Wilson at 510/524-2399 and let them know your thoughts.

GOOD NEWS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRONT

Although it seems to be rarer and rarer, there is some good news to cheer over in the world of conservation.

On our own turf, the battle to save wildlife habitat and a foraging area for the Golden Eagle was won when Orinda voters turned down the Gateway Project development. GGAS has offered the City of Orinda \$25,000 from our Sanctuary Fund to help purchase this property and we believe that the East Bay Regional Park District is also interested in this property. We hope that this election result will make the developer more amenable to selling this property.

Letters from our members to the East Bay Regional Park District encouraging them to purchase the Gateway property would be appreciated. Please write to:

Pat O'Brien
General Manager

East Bay Regional Park District
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
P.O. Box 5381
Oakland, CA 94605-0381

Another recent success was the signature gathering for the CALPAW (California Parks and Wildlife) initiative aided by the efforts of over 30 of our GGAS members. The CALPAW initiative received enough signatures to qualify for the June ballot. If passed, this initiative would allot over \$40 million to the East Bay Regional Park District. It would also provide \$1 million for wetlands restoration at Candlestick State Recreation Area in San Francisco, and would provide over \$40 million for the acquisition of wetlands throughout the Bay Area.

GGAS was successful, with 16 other environmental organizations, in pressuring the EPA to set fresh water flow standards for the San Francisco Bay/Delta. GGAS was the lead

organization in a lawsuit that demanded that the EPA set these standards. The EPA, realizing that it had a responsibility under law to insure appropriate standards, responded to our lawsuit by agreeing to set such standards before the end of the year.

We were forced to take these actions because of the State's failure to act. Although the State Water Resources Control Board had reached a decision to provide more water to the Bay and Delta in order to preserve fish and wildlife populations, outcries from agriculture led to a retreat from this position. Governor Wilson supported this retreat, leaving the Bay and Delta unprotected from further water diversions.

So yes, we do win a few in our efforts to preserve our natural world. But we are successful only because of your support. Keep up your efforts and we'll do the same. Thanks to you all.

ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

A U D U B O N

ARMCHAIR ACTIVIST

At Home Action for Environmental Protection

**Call the office at (510) 843-2222
to find out how you can
participate.**

NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee will be meeting soon to consider candidates for officers and directors of Golden Gate Audubon Society for the next election. In accordance with the Bylaws, the general membership of GGAS may make nominations by petition. Please submit petitions to the Nominating Committee no later than January 15, 1994.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

BACK YARD BIRDER

We are fortunate to have Richard Avanzino, President of the S. F. SPCA, writing a column in our local paper. He not only writes in an entertaining manner but his column covers a range of subjects of interest to bird and animal lovers. In a recent edition he brought to light a topic we might all consider: the use of balloons as a festive means of celebrating. What happens when we release them? They have to come down somewhere. They can blow thousands of miles and from our coastal region they have a good chance of landing in the ocean. Marine animals find these shiny mylar and latex balloons irresistible since they resemble jellyfish and other delicacies. Recently a California Clapper Rail was found drowned at the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge. The bird was entangled in a balloon ribbon wrapped around a clump of grass and drowned when the tide came in. There aren't that many California Clapper Rails left—about 500—so the loss of even one is a tragedy.

Luckily, the public is becoming more aware of the dangers of balloon releases and they are banned in Florida, Tennessee and Connecticut. Some cities have joined in. San Francisco's Park and Recreation Dept. does not allow releases on city property, which includes Candlestick Park. No one wants to spoil the festive aspects of balloons. Just be aware of the consequences of releasing them.

Another way to make your trash safe for the birds and animals which haunt the dumps is to cut up any plastic round, such as the soft drink carriers, before throwing away. Try to buy food items which are packaged with recyclable materials if this is possible.

Think of cleanliness if you feed birds in your yard. If you feed hummingbirds

you should change the nectar every 3 days during hot weather and at least weekly when it's cooler. The nectar starts to ferment over time which causes enlarged livers in your hummers. Also, offer suet only in cool weather—sun-warmed suet mats feathers, which can reduce insulation and waterproofing. Or, it can cause inflamed or infected follicles and the loss of facial feathers. Seed feeders should be kept clean. Damp seed can become moldy, as can damp bread, and if this mold is inhaled it can cause a lethal infection. If possible, place seed feeders near shrubs or trees so that birds can escape cats and other predators. I don't want to discourage anyone from feeding birds—it enhances our lives.

If you have the time, the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University can use you as feeder observers in gathering data about numbers of birds and species plus bits of interesting behavior.

Human beings are important, but they compete with birds and most other animals for both habitat and food resources. We must maintain sensitivity to these non-human residents of our planet if only because I, personally, cannot imagine a day which didn't begin and end with bird songs. What would be the point of living if our lives were not enriched with the sights and sounds of nature?

—MEG PAULETICH

SEED AND FEEDERS

Our next seed sale is not until late January, but we've plenty of seed and a good selection of feeders on hand in the meantime. December can be a long cold month, so call and come by the office if you're running low.

KENYA SAFARI

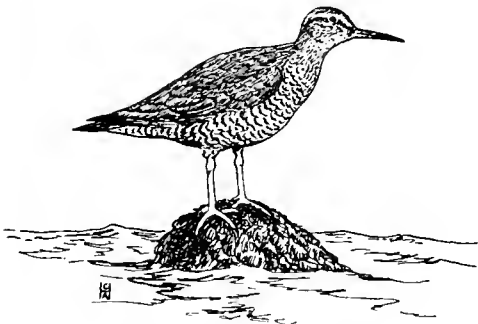
Alan Hopkins, GGAS Board members, field trip leader and bird photographer, will co-lead a 17-day safari in Kenya next summer with a guide from Park East Tours to some of the premier building and wildlife viewing areas of Kenya. The itinerary covers a wide range of habitats to provide maximum bird and wildlife diversity: expect to see 300 to 400 species total and in some areas as many as 100 species in a single morning!

Dates are July/August, 1994, the coolest time of the year in Kenya, ideal for wildlife viewing with an excellent chance of catching the wildebeest migration in the Masai Mara.

Areas to be visited include the North and South Coast, Tsavo, Amboseli, Samburu, the Aberderes, Lake Naivasha, the Masai Mara and Nairobi.

For more information, please call Marcia or Tasha at Park East Tours (800-223-6078); or Alan Hopkins at (415) 664-0983.

Total cost is \$4,100.00 which includes round-trip air-fare from San Francisco. A percentage of each person's costs will go to support Golden Gate Audubon's conservation and education programs. Please join us on this exciting adventure.



MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC TRIP

Start the new year with a day on Monterey Bay searching out winter bird and mammal life. Weather, even in January, tends to be comparatively mild and the cold waters teem with wildlife. Possible bird species include Sooty, Short-tailed, Pink-footed and Black-vented shearwaters; Black-legged Kittiwake; Rhinoceros and Cassin's auklets, Marbled and Ancient murrelets. Mammal interest of course centers on Gray Whales, with a number of dolphin species possible. And, naturally, there are always surprises.

Date: Saturday, January 15, 1994

Cost: \$37.50

Leaders: Alan Hopkins, Dan Singer

To reserve a place, send payment to GGAS, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702.

* * *

Tentative dates of 1994 pelagic trips include: May 21, August 21, September 17, and October 22 (Monterey Bay); and June 26 (Farallones). Mark your calendars and look for details in future issues of *The Gull*.

To the Editor:

I'm enclosing a check for the Papageno Project. It's a great idea. My mother died at a hospice in Branford, Connecticut, in March of this year. The weather for the eight weeks I was back there was particularly bad: lots of cold weather, snow and ice storms. There was a feeder in the courtyard of the hospice and watching the visitors to the "open-air" restaurant, particularly the cardinals, gave us some pleasure and affirmation of life at a time when we all needed it.

Cira M. Curri

PLAN AHEAD: 1994 GGAS PROGRAMS

Thursday, January 13 San Francisco

"Wildlife of the Golden Gate Recreation Area"—Judd Howell. Biologist and researcher will share slides of the interesting wildlife in our own backyard and share findings from studies he is conducting with the help of Earth Watch volunteers.

Thursday, February 10 Berkeley

"Burrowing Owl Project: Preliminary Results"—David DeSante. Many chapter members have helped collect important field observations for this study of the Burrowing Owl's status in the Bay Area and Central Valley. Learn about how owl populations are doing.

Thursday, March 10 San Francisco

"Avian Diversity of the Rainforests of Cameroon"—Tom Smith. Travel to this West African country to learn about the fascinating bird life and findings of this UC San Francisco-sponsored study.

Thursday, April 14 Berkeley

"Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas"—Dave Shuford. Another program where GGAS "atlasers" can learn about the fruits of their labors. Point Reyes Bird Observatory biologist will tell us how the Marin Atlas revolutionized the way we look at bird distribution.

All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. San Francisco meetings are at the Josephine Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way. Berkeley meetings are at Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda.

—JOELLE BUFFA

NEWS FROM OUR RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch (415) 868-9244
Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970
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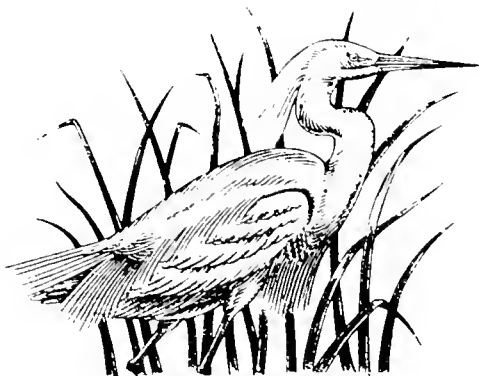
Season's Greetings

It's the holiday season again and we at ACR wish you, our friends and supporters a very happy holiday season. If you happen to be in west Marin on a weekday afternoon, stop at the Ranch and pick-up one of those very special holiday gifts. The Ranch store is open from 1 until 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

Do include ACR among your resolutions for 1994. Plan to visit the Ranch this spring, or plan a walk at the Bouverie Preserve. Count shorebirds or waterfowl on Tomales Bay, or monitor harbor seal disturbances with us. Become a Ranch volunteer at any of our preserves. Join us for '94.

Heronry Successes

Helen Pratt and friends once again monitored our heronry and others in Marin County. We had 7 Great Blue Heron nests, all successful, which produced an average of 2.14 young per nest. Sadly, the Stafford Lake heronry failed this year, presumably because of



Golden Eagle predation and disturbance. An estimated 104 pairs of Great Egrets nested with a success rate of 1.41 young per nest. Ranch Guide Ray Paula observed ravens take a couple of 2-week-old chicks from an unattended nest on July 4. Such predation has not been previously documented, and it may help explain why nest production fell from the previous year. Snowy Egret nests are very difficult to locate, but they are surely on the increase with eleven this year. No estimate was made on nest success. Thanks again to Helen for this, her 27th year of heronry observations.

Celebrate With Us

Registration for the following programs may be made by calling (415) 868-9244.

Saturday, January 15. "Coastal Prairie Restoration Day" at Cypress Grove Preserve. It's time to help replant native

bunch grasses at Tomales Bay with our ACR staff. It's FREE, but do register.

Saturday, March 5. "Spring Work Day" at Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. Join our staff and friends as we spruce up for spring and the public season. Due to the actual scarcity of spruce in the area, we will provide a FREE lunch. What a deal! Do call to register.

Bouverie Preserve Guided Nature Walks

Saturdays, Dec. 11, Jan. 22 and Feb. 12; 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Enjoy the rich beauty of the Bouverie Audubon Preserve on one of these free guided nature walks. Reservations are taken as early as the beginning of the month preceding the walk of your choice. Call (707) 938-4554 to reserve your place.

—DAN MURPHY

GIFTS and BEQUESTS

FOR GGAS

Gift of
Edmund C. Levin

FOR PAPAGENO PROJECT

Judith S. Rothman
Cira M. Curri

FOR AUDUBON ADVENTURES

Michael J. Kenney
Sylvia L. Sykora

For BIRDATHON

Marjorie E. Alter

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

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THE GULL

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The GULL*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.



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